

LET'S EXPLORE



Islands dotting Lake Waywayanda combine with tree-edged coves to make mountain appear like bit from travelogue.

ROUTE 23 certainly ranks as one of the state's most scenic highways and just as certainly it carries one of the heaviest loads of Sunday traffic to vacationlands in West Jersey. Consequently there is little cause to wonder why the slow drivers who are out to see the scenery clash constantly with the drivers who are hustling to get some place.

Even the motorist who looks upon Route 23 only as a ribbon of concrete leading to High Point Park or some of the lakes must admit that the scenery is superb. The Highlands rise sharply from the highway and gushing streams plunge downward through the area, pausing only to fill reservoirs or lakes.

For those who like the Upper Highlands today's trip proposes getting off Route 23 and driving north where the beauty can be absorbed far away from blowing horns. Most of the route's traffic trouble starts west of Butler, where the highway narrows from four lanes to two, throwing the slow-driving scenery lover into sharp perspective.

The scenic admirer will do every one a favor (including



Heavily wooded Bearfort Mountain is backdrop for a lake near West Milford. This valley has been attractive to farmers for nearly two centuries.

Upper Highlands

BY JOHN T. CUNNINGHAM



A picnic area near Echo Lake Reservoir, part of Newark's great watershed.

himself) if he'll look for Macopin Intake on the left about three miles past the start of the two-lane road, then take the next road to the right beyond the intake. A sign pointing to "Echo Baptist Church" marks the corner definitively.

NOW the way is open for nearly 50 miles of riding through heavily-wooded and slightly-populated mountain country. The trip swings up and down the Bearfort, Kanouse, Waywayanda and Hamburg mountains to permit fullest enjoyment of the Upper Highlands. Much of the trip passes through the great Pequannock watershed, owned by Newark.

The first major part of the Newark system is Echo Lake, on the left about a mile after turning north. State topographic maps continue to call the lake by its original Indian name — Macopin — and early historians tell of a "Whisper Alley" which made it possible to converse across the full two-mile length.

Beyond the reservoir the road runs up the eastern side of heavily-wooded Kanouse Mountain to the town of West Milford, where a sharp turn is made just beyond the school. The trip almost doubles back on itself at this turn.

West Milford is the center of the big Passaic County township bearing the same name. All of today's drive from the start to beyond Upper Greenwood Lake is in the 116-year-old township and it is well to learn briefly about it.

THE township reached a population peak of 2,624 residents in 1850 when iron mines boomed in the mountains and fertile soil called farmers to the valleys. After 1880 the establishment of the Newark watershed and the decline of iron mining cut the population sharply until the 1920 census showed only 1,763 residents. That, however, has almost doubled in the past 30 years as new roads have made the township more readily accessible.

From the town of West
NEWARK SUNDAY NEWS

Milford the road south cuts through the valley between the Bearfort and Kanouse mountains. The motorist can readily note that Bearfort to the right (west) is the higher, which points up the fact that the Highlands decline in altitude from west to east. Kanouse averages between 1,000 and 1,100 feet above sea level while Bearfort is about 1,300 feet high throughout. Peaks in the Waywayanda and Hamburg mountains to the west range well over 1,400 feet.

Family roots are deep throughout this area. The Terhunes, for example, who operate a large apple orchard a mile and a half south of the town of West Milford go back to seven generations in the same house and they know that a grist mill was operated on their farm before the Revolution.

Slightly more than three miles down the valley from the Terhune farm a right swing in macadamized La Rue road leads toward Clinton Reservoir and past the old Post farm. The sixth generation of Posts are living in the farm

house which the present owner, Charles Post, says is "way over 100 years old."

Once the Posts refined much maple sugar from the vast stand of maple trees in this Bearfort mountain region but not much sugar-making is done on the farm now. However, the profusion of maples in the area makes this a flaming beauty spot when Autumn foliage is at its height.

LA RUE road runs into Clinton road and a right turn north carries past spreading Clinton Reservoir to Upper Greenwood Lake. Just before the reservoir is reached a tall stone chimney commands attention to the right. This is one of the few early iron forges left intact in the state. "September 17, 1833" chiseled in a stone near the base is the probable date the 40-foot high forge was built. Vines clamber up the splendidly-built structure and tall trees from the perfectly-preserved bit of early Americana.

Keep to the east side of Clinton Reservoir for nearly 2½ miles of pleasant shore
(Continued on Following Page)



Forge near Clinton Reservoir is 117-year-old reminder of a once-rich iron mining section.

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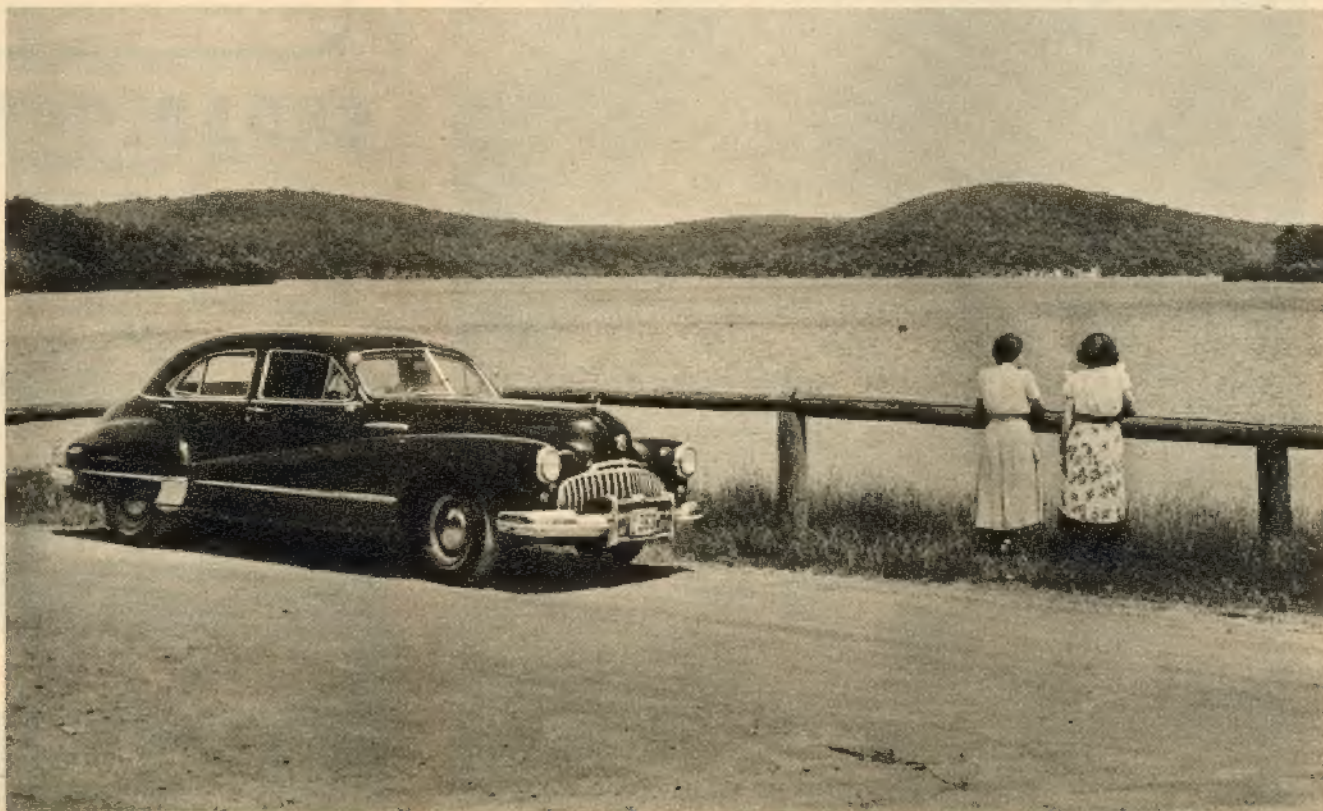
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Route around Upper Greenwood Lake provides peeks at lovely bathing beaches.



Motorists pause at southern end of Clinton Reservoir for eye-filling view.

UPPER HIGHLANDS

(Cont'd from Preceding Page)

views. The road changes from macadam to gravel as it cuts through tight forest country, relieved only by tall pines whose thickness has cut off growth to give the illusion of open spaces under the trees.

Great boulders nestle in the woods and the combination of the rocks and trees make it easy to see why this area has never been greatly settled. Near Upper Greenwood Lake a small pond to the left clogged with dead evergreens is reminiscent of South Jersey's dead cedar swamps.

Upper Greenwood Lake can be viewed from good roads around its perimeter. However, today's trip swings left up the west side of the lake and then takes the next left over the mountain toward Warwick, N. Y. This is a splendid ride, climaxed by a sweeping panoramic view as the road dips sharply down into the Warwick Valley near the New York State border.

Just over the New York line Route 94 is met. Turn left, then take the second road left off 94 up Waywayanda Mountain for rugged scenery that rivals anything in the state. Route 94 offers a hard-surfaced return by way of New Milford (N. Y.) and Vernon but you'll be glad you decided on the mountain road.

THE road up Waywayanda is hard gravel and at times narrows, although it is never difficult to travel. Occasionally the driver may have to stop for some one bound in the opposite direction but such courtesy is natural so far away from the speedways. Small rural bridges crossing meandering woodland streams and farmlands wrested from the mountain only after years of toil make Waywayanda a spot to be enjoyed leisurely.

After a constant climb up the mountain a right turn is made at the top near a cluster of buildings. Suddenly Lake Waywayanda appears through the trees, like something out of a travelogue. Tiny islands dot its surface and thick woods outline its deep coves. The lake is owned by the New Jersey Zinc Co. in Franklin. Around the lake the road is narrow again for a half mile but it widens past Lake Wanda and becomes macadamized at Highland Lakes.

A left turn is made at the head of Highland Lakes along the western slope of Waywayanda Mountain. On the high ridge ahead is the highest point in the Highlands, 1,486 feet above sea level (compared with 1,827 feet at High Point in the Kittatinny Mountains).

The road winds to the right and down the slope to an intersection with the Vernon-Stockholm road. There a left turn takes the motorist down Hamburg Mountain and back to Route 23 after a trip through a decidedly different part of New Jersey.

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